

OLITNESS, INSULAR AND CONTINENTAL.

Without politeness the world of men would be little better than the world of brutes. Civilized men are from unanimous; but then they agree to differ. In society people often make war; but in a good society they never declare it. Good-breeding requires that even enemies should avoid offensive forms and expressions. You may go out with a man to shoot him through the heart; in a duel, but you must bow to him politely first. An insult may even be returned politely. When Lanzon broke his sword in the presence of Louis XIV, saying, "I will no longer serve a king who does not keep his word," the king threw his cane out of the window, adding, "I shall never be said that I have betrayed a man of noble birth." The thrashing was given morally, and the outraged royal dignity was fully satisfied.

As to polite rebukes, they are not uncommon, and are far more easy to administer. Frederick, called the Great, of Prussia, at least, had very great snuff-snafers. To save the trouble of continually putting his hand in his pocket, he had a snuff-box out the chimney-piece of every room in the suite of rooms he occupied. One day, when busily in his cabinet, he saw a woman, who fancied herself to be a princess, and was busily taunting the royal snuff. He took no notice of her at the time; but about an hour afterwards he entered the room to bring her the box.

"Take a pinch," said the king. "How do you find it?"

"Excellent, sire."

"And the box?"

"Superb, sire."

"Very well, sir; keep it then. It hardly holds enough to hold a snuff."

The code of the social code adopted by the world in which we live, is therefore necessary for those who wish to figure creditably in that world. But rules alone are not sufficient; there are exceptions—occasions who fail to apply, and in which the social code is not to be held in courtesy.

Deferences to other's precedence to elders, submission to rank and authority, are the very emblem of that spirit. George III once complimented Dr. Johnson on his masterly delivery of his homely sayings, and asked him if he were the doctor. "And what did you say all that?"

"Nothing," was the judicious reply. "Was I to banish my opinions with my sovereign?" He accepted the royal approbation, as was his duty.

The social code of the world in which we live was highly spoken of, at the court of Louis XIV. The king, wishing to test his politeness, invited him to a shooting-party. At the moment of starting to drive to the woods, the king stopped his carriage, and said to him, "Sir, saying, "Get into the carriage, Monsieur l'Amis assessor." Lord S—— did not wait to be twice told to do so. Instead of humbly retreating and attempting to decline such an honor, he obeyed at once, and, in the most dignified manner, except on occasion of a wedding or a christening; when not in attendance, they may wear black, or not, as pleases them, best. Their distinctive mark from other ladies is white satin sleeves, dressed with black lace.

It is often, therefore, the truest politeness simply to do what you are requested to do.

Politeness is not exactly a virtue, but an imitation and assumption of certain virtues. It induces us to appear more self-denying, indulgent, more considerate, more thoughtful, and rude to appear the contrary.

We are polite for our own sakes quite as much as for other people's.

Politeness is the art of disguising our feelings and passions rather than of repressing them; it is a wise and safe device.

Calculated to give a man of justice, it does not make a man better, but it makes him infinitely more sociable—as is indicated by the derivation of the word itself and its synonymous.

The root of politeness is *polos*, a town; courtesy comes from the Latin *politus*, refined, according to Ainsworth, in the course which citizens use to one another. Politeness, not content with avoiding everything that can possibly displease, continually and actively strives to please.

It satisfies the demands, as well as the taste, of the nose, and adds to the value of the actions. When simply and naturally practised, and without any affectation, it almost amounts to friendship and affection.

Paul is a convert to a farce resort of mankind, and others whose population subsequently consists of a certain number of inhabitants and a very great many strangers. Everybody lets furnished apartments, from the humblest citizen to the highest personage. Guests are received in the same rooms with a south aspect and a fine view of the Pyrenees." There is no harm in this; it is convenient; but it gave occasion for a sharp rebuke.

Madame C——, the wife of one of the richest merchants in Paris, was remarked for the elegance of her dress. Such elegance, displayed by a simple commoner, displeased one of the noble dames of Paul, Madame de Contesse d'Albret.

"What do you call that?" she said, contemptuously glancing at the Parisienne.

"That is Madame C——," was replied to her. "I do not know," the Contesse answered, "of a finer dress."

Madame C——, who overheard every word of the conversation, inquired in turn, loud enough to be heard, and pointing with her finger to the haughty maid, "What do you call that?"

"Ah! yes, I know. She's a letter of lodgings. We think of taking her rooms next season."

In the very highest society the same pair of gloves may not be worn twice; at least they must never be seen in the same trace or of having been worn.

Monks, gloves, were a great luxury.

Evening gloves, most of them, were spotless, fresh, and new. Consequently the glover's bill is one of the best items of the personal wardrobe of M. Moret, M. Baudouin, M. Gobert, and M. Moret, who have eight thousand francs or seven hundred and twenty pounds a year, on gloves. Those who have less than seven hundred a year must compromise the matter as we can't do.

Sister Anne, Lady Blanche Blanqueta disgraced herself by a love-match with M. Néro, nobody. I happened to dine at a wealthy mansion. Of course everybody had their word to say, "These things" observed a dowager by my side, "then we only eight hundred a year between them."

"No more!" exclaimed the lady of the house. "Why that will only serve them for gloves."

"It is very lucky for me," I said, "that it is not a fashion to dine in gloves; for I never had eight hundred a year, and most likely never shall."

The fine folks present were good enough not to appear as the bold confidante of gloveless ladies, but, with it, the equanimity with which they conversed was perfect.

Gloves should fit like a second skin, and be worn buttoned at the wrist. A French authority (Alphonse Kar) tells you to take a gentleman's hand with your own, and, when you are seated, when you touch a lady's is a proof of the respect with which you regard her. Gloves also have their court etiquette. If you are honored by the eye with an audience, he sees chamberlain, Sir, Madam, etc., before you lay off your gloves before entering.

The Red Feather, he tells you, "like the Holy Communion, is approached only with ungloved hands."

I suppose it was in a similar rule that the two latter modes are common in Italy, and possibly may have reached us thence. Young single ladies abroad are not allowed to have independent cards all to themselves. They are to have their own on their man's family business card, thus:

Madame et Monsieur le d'A B C.

One particular class of visits cannot, on the continent, be neglected or avoided; namely, those of New Year's Day. A comfortable little margin is left in the month of December for visiting; but the sooner they are paid the better.

The most respectful New Year's visits—those, for instance, to grandparents—are made on the eve of the day.

To old friends, or to those in whom you trust,

they are to be made on the 24th.

A card may be substituted for a call, calling

reserves itself three degrees of composure—the superlative, when you call, enter the house, and pay your respects personally; the intermediate, when you desire to be seen; and the lowest, when you call without visiting your card; the positive, when you simply send your card by the hands of a servant. A card is thus a heraldic scroll, a kind of diploma, or certificate, on which you touch a lady's is a proof of the respect with which you regard her. Gloves also have their court etiquette. If you are honored by the eye with an audience, he sees chamberlain, Sir, Madam, etc., before you lay off your gloves before entering.

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